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ABSTRACT

A project to promote collaboration between child and adult literacy educators in a family English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) literacy program is described. It arose from conflicting opinions and concerns voiced by teachers familiar with different student groups and with different instructional frames of reference. Quarterly teacher preplanning sessions and weekly planning meetings were held to define and expand on instructional themes. The planning sessions were found to be most useful when carefully structured to work toward specific, stated project goals, using a grid system. Teachers came to the weekly sessions with ideas to implement the agreed-upon theme and explained them in detail. It was found that to collaborate fully, child and adult educators had to adjust their perspectives somewhat. Native language community liaisons were frequent participants in planning sessions. Although these individuals initially adhered to traditional concepts of instruction, they adapted their approaches to the conceptual framework underlying the project. It is concluded that while the project took much time and energy, its results were worthwhile and made it possible to address the needs and value the strengths of all students. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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COLLABORATIVE PLANNING IN A FAMILY ENGLISH LITERACY PROGRAM

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"But how will my students learn English grammar if they spend all their time writing about family life in their native country?" "What do you mean 'correct all the errors' in their writing?" "I've prepared a role playing script for the students to read. They aren't advanced enough in oral English to tell about their New Year's celebration in their own language." "We'll be in for the intergenerational family Valentine's Day party as soon as we finish these worksheets." "My students need to practice talking. I don't need to write down what they say. They aren't ready to read and write."

These comments are examples of opinions expressed by adult and child educators while planning activities for a family English literacy program. The differing training and points-of-view of the two groups caused some creative tension among the staff, but with collaboration resulted in a more effective program. [See Nurss, 1992 and Nurss & Rawlston, 1993 for a description of Project CLASS and its curriculum.]

In order to facilitate teacher input and collabòrtion, quarterly teacher pre-planning sessions and weekly planning meetings were scheduled. These planning sessions were conceptual as well as logistical, defining and developing the quarter's theme, implemented by all teachers in both the age-graded and the intergenerational family activities.

Through trial and error we learned that these collaborative planning sessions worked best when structured in such a way that the parameters were clearly defined. One "structure" that worked

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well was use of a grid that stated the project goals. At the quarterly planning meetings, the themes and broad activities were established collectively. Each lesson was to be integrated around a central theme with language and literacy content designed to meet the needs of each participant. Themes were chosen to implement the goal of family support of the children's schooling. A sample lesson planning grid is shown in Figure 1.

Teachers came to the weekly planning sessions with ideas to implement the jointly agreed upon theme tentatively written on the grid. They would explain their grids to the other teachers, explore how the students could collaborate, and determine the goals of this collaboration. In order to do this, teachers needed a lot of information about the language and literacy skills of all the students and how to use this information to plan integrated instruction.

Teachers of adults and of children came to the meeting with different frames of reference. Adult and secondary school ESOL teachers typically are trained in English with an emphasis on language skills. They tend to be subject matter-oriented. Their orientation to planning is to find materials to teach specific language skills. ESOL teachers of younger children are more likely to be child-oriented and to plan concrete, hands-on activities. Their orientation is to think of a good activity rather than the specific language and literacy skills.

In order to be successful in our intergenerational program, both groups of teachers had to adjust their thinking to include

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the perspective of the other group. The adult teachers had to become more process oriented; to think more of concrete, hands-on ways to teach language and literacy; to use more realia, field trips, and real life experiences; to integrate language processes and skills into an on-going activity. On the other hand, the child teachers had to become more aware of the language processes and skills used in the activity and to focus on making certain that each activity contained specific oral and/or written language instruction and practice.

Native language community liaisons were frequent participants in the planning sessions. They helped to clarify traditional family practices, observances of celebrations, student reactions to lessons, and what was currently happening in the communities. Involving the liaisons in planning helped them to explain to their language-groups the activities and their purposes. This increased the liaisons' self-esteem and added to their credibility in the community because they were informed and aware of the teachers' plans.

However, the liaisons' traditional concept of education usually conflicted with the integrated, whole language curriculum. The liaisons found it hard to understand how a field trip to the supermarket with language and literacy activities planned before, during, and after the trip was effective in learning English. Initially they asked for more grammar lessons and vocabulary drills. Over the years, they accommodated their definition of education to the conceptual framework. By the end,

many were convinced that indeed making an illustrated, bound family story book with bilingual text and input from each family member was another way to learn English grammar and vocabulary!

The collaborative planning process used in this program took a lot of time and energy to develop and implement. However, the resulting instruction and learning made it worthwhile. The collaboration made it possible to address the needs and value the strengths of each student in the process. It strengthened the goals and methods of the teachers' classroom activities because all were working in concert.

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Figure 1
Collaborative Planning Grid

FAMILY · INTERGENERATIONAL LESSON PLANS	**Theme:** Storytelling		
Family/Intergenerational aspect	Picture storybook reading between preschoolers and adults.	Middle and Upper Grades students transcribe traditional stories told on audiotape by their parents.	Adults record native stories to read to the elementary students.
Cultural aspect	Traditional nursery rhymes and stories from their native country and from the U.S.	Transcriptions preserve oral or traditional stories for future sharing with family and friends, as well as the community.	Traditional or family stories are preserved and shared with family, school, and community.
Literacy aspect	Adults model reading activity with children: line scanning, previewing illustrations, vocabulary discussions related to illustrations.	Students write other stories they have heard told by their parents. (Students write in English.)	Adults compose their stories or record traditional stories on computer using word processing software.
ESOL aspect: listening speaking reading writing	Listening to stories being read. Concepts of print. Story structure.	Students expand English vocabulary, grammar, written conventions, fluency.	Adults utilize their writing skills, enlarge their vocabulary skills, and refine their grammatical knowledge to tell stories.
School aspect	Reading activities between parents and children prepare students to participate in story reading in school.	Stories can be bound in booklets and kept in the school library to be shared with school students and staff.	Parents come into the schools to read their stories to their children's classes.
Community aspect	Reading activity and care of reading materials prepares students at a young age to visit local libraries.	Written stories can be made available to the community through the school or local library, thus enhancing understanding between cultures.	Parents are seen as a cultural resource to the school and community.
Each activity will address different language or literacy aspects.	**Activity I**: Preschool Storytelling Unit: The Three Bears	**Activity II**: Middle and Upper Grades Storytelling Unit: Stories Our Parents Have Told	**Activity III**: Adult Storytelling Unit: Stories from Our Native Country, Retold for Our Children.